

# **SOUTH MAIN – MILLER REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**

## **March 2007**

### **I. DEVELOPMENT AREA REPORT**

#### **A. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to outline: (a) the conditions that substantially impair development of the area described as the South Main-Miller Redevelopment Area, and; (b) plans and activities proposed to facilitate redevelopment of said area. It sets forth the need for urban redevelopment tax increment funds, under provisions of the Ohio Revised Code, Sections 5709.41 to 5709.43, to finance significant public investment needed to abate conditions which prevent sound economic growth of the area and to bring about needed development for Akron to maintain its job and tax base.

#### **B. Location and Boundary Description**

The South Main-Miller Redevelopment Area is located in the City of Akron, County of Summit, State of Ohio as generally shown on Map 1. Said area is bounded as shown on Map 2 and more fully described in Exhibit A. The entire area consists of 9.1 acres of land and public rights-of-way, and includes 5.5 acres of developable property fronting on South Main Street, South Broadway, Miller Avenue, and Long Street.

#### **C. Background**

Over several decades, the South Main-Miller Redevelopment Area has declined in private business activity due to various factors. Reduction of rubber product manufacturing in the 1970's and 1980's at B. F. Goodrich and the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, situated north and south of this area respectively, hastened its economic decline. The relocation of the Bridgestone/ Firestone World Headquarters from Akron in 1992 resulted in significant job losses to the immediate area and was a major contributor to the area's further business downturn. Finally, the existing aging buildings, the transitional character of the land use, and limited vehicular access to the area, which is largely bounded by one-way arterials on South Main Street and South Broadway Street, has limited the redevelopment potential of the area.

During this period of market downturn, the City of Akron initiated a land-banking program in the area to make select opportunity purchases of land being marketed for public sale. In addition, the City was offered and accepted a donation of the former Firestone/ Bank One building. As a result of these real estate transactions, the City now maintains land ownership of all properties in the Redevelopment Area.

D. Description of Area and Project

The project area is situated in a transitional land use area approximately one-quarter mile south of Interstate 76 and one-quarter mile north of the landmark Bridgestone/ Firestone Tire and Rubber Company complex. All land within the Redevelopment Area is owned by the City of Akron. The area is characterized by a vacant office building and an underutilized retail-commercial building with adjacent surface parking areas and numerous vacant lots. Surrounding land uses include mixed business, commercial, residential, and vacant land to the north and south, commercial property and railroad to the east, and residential and vacant property to the west.

The establishment of the Redevelopment Area will assist the City in its efforts to attract private developers for the area. The two existing buildings in the Redevelopment Area are:

- The former Firestone/ Bank One building at 1115 South Main Street. The Firestone/ Bank One building is a three-story office building built in 1956 as a bank and contains 49,720 square feet of space. It has suffered interior water damage and has been vacant since 2000. The roof, elevator, and heating and air-conditioning systems are deteriorated and in need of significant repair or replacement.
- The former Acme Express/ Youngfellow Pharmacy at 25 West Miller Avenue. The Acme / Youngfellow's building is a one-story structure built in 1950 as a grocery store and contains 16,250 square feet of gross area. This building is currently vacant, although it has most recently been used as a small machine shop and is suitable for adaptive reuse for retail, office, or commercial use.

The City proposes to seek private developers and enter into agreements with them to renovate and redevelop these properties for

suitable business use. There is sufficient land within the Redevelopment Area adjacent to each building to provide an adequate site for their redevelopment, including parking. Suitable utilities are also in place or could be readily provided. A long-range objective is to encourage construction of a new building at the northwest corner of Main Street and Miller Avenue.

The area shows definite signs of neglect, which serve as a substantial impediment to the development of the area.

- 1) Most of the Redevelopment Area contains vacant land or land intended for surface parking, but existing parking areas are in need of resurfacing and lack landscaping.
- 2) An unscreened loading area and storage yard surrounded by a chain link-fence exists behind the Acme/ Youngfellow's building and is visible from West Long Street.
- 3) Some sidewalks and curbs in the area are in deteriorated condition.
- 4) The facades of the Firestone/ Bank One and Acme/ Youngfellow buildings have been neglected and are in need of repair and cleaning.

## **II. REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**

### **A. Land Use and Zoning**

#### **1. Land Use Plan**

##### **a. Land Use (Map 3)**

The existing land use within the Redevelopment Area is primarily characterized by commercial and vacant property. Surrounding land uses are largely residential with scattered office, retail, commercial-industrial, and vacant land. The Redevelopment Area is presently designated for retail business use by the City's Land Use and Development Guide Plan.

##### **b. Land Use Provisions**

Objectives under the Land Use and Development Guide Plan include: (1) Encourage the renovation or redevelopment of older neighborhood business districts including public improvements; (2) Encourage alternative land uses in areas which are no longer suitable for business and are a blighting influence on the surrounding neighborhood; and (3) Designate sufficient land for commercial-industrial development to allow a variety of parcel sizes and locations.

2. Zoning

a. Existing Zoning (See Map 4)

The area is zoned U-3 Retail Business along Main Street, Miller Road, and most of Long Street. Broadway Street is zoned U-4 Commercial. Several lots on the western portion of Long Street are zoned U-1 Single-Family Residence.

b. Proposed Zoning (See Map 5)

The existing area on Miller Road zoned U-1 Single-Family Residence is proposed to be rezoned to U-3 Retail Business. No further change to the existing zoning is proposed within the Main-Miller Redevelopment Area.

B. Statement of Development Objectives

1. Land Use Objectives

- a. Enhance the viability of the Redevelopment Area by encouraging business uses that are compatible with the character of the area and vicinity and can develop the fullest potential of the district.
- b. Prohibit uses that are incompatible with those in the area and vicinity and that would detract from the viable development of the area.
- c. Prescribe quality development standards to improve the usefulness and appearance of the area that are conducive

to new private business investment.

- d. Because South Main Street at Miller Avenue is a viable activity node, reserve sufficient space to accommodate the long - range construction of a new building of approximately 7,500 square feet at the northwest corner of this intersection.

## 2. Environmental Objectives

- a. Eliminate substandard physical conditions as well as environmental hazards and unsanitary conditions that exist within the Redevelopment Area.
- b. Correct problems within the project area that may threaten health and safety.
- c. Improve functional, physical, and aesthetic conditions of the project area so as to create an attractive office or business park-like setting.

## 3. Public Improvement Objectives

- a. Correct deficiencies in existing physical conditions in or serving the Redevelopment Area.
- b. Upgrade the condition of the public streetscape within the area and enhance the utility and appearance of the area to suit redevelopment.
- c. Develop public parking needed to facilitate redevelopment.

## 4. Economic Objectives

- b. Retain and increase employment opportunities within the City of Akron.
- c. Enhance property and income tax revenues for the City through new construction and job creation within the Redevelopment Area.

- d. Attract necessary public and private sector investment to undertake redevelopment activities in the area and demonstrate business confidence.
- e. Encourage the reuse of vacant and underutilized land.

### **III. PROJECT PROPOSALS**

#### **A. Land Acquisition**

The City of Akron owns all of the land within the Redevelopment Area. Therefore, no further land acquisition by the City is needed.

#### **B. Public Improvements**

The City will construct all public improvements necessary to facilitate development of the area. This will include the replacement of sidewalks and curbs as well as construction of public parking within the Redevelopment Area.

#### **C. Sale of Land to Redeveloper**

The City will offer buildings and/ or land for purchase by private owners who present viable plans for redevelopment consistent with the objectives of this redevelopment plan.

#### **D. Redeveloper's Obligations for Land Purchase or Leased from The City of Akron**

- 1. Developers will be obligated to construct and maintain the structures and facilities in accordance with all codes and ordinances of the City of Akron, and must abide by the development standards prepared for the Redevelopment Area.
- 2. Construction upon land sold or leased by the City shall be in accordance with all terms and conditions of a Development Agreement executed by the City and the project developer.

#### **E. Development Standards**

- 1. All development shall conform to the standards as established in the subchapter on Development and Area District Requirements at 153.285 et seq. of the Akron Zoning Code,

except where other standards are noted in this document.

2. All manufacturing, processing, crating and uncrating service and repair operations shall be conducted within enclosed buildings.
3. All outdoor storage areas and loading or unloading bay areas shall be screened from view by solid walls or solid fences or landscaping that is at least six (6) feet in height. Such fencing and screening material shall be reviewed and approved by the Department of Planning and Urban Development (DPUD).
4. Sanitary sewers must be provided for the area prior to construction, and these sewers must be subject to the approval of the Akron Engineering Bureau according to City of Akron standards.
5. A storm water management plan for each phase must be approved by the Akron Engineering Bureau.
6. The minimum building line shall conform to Section 153.320 of the Akron Zoning Code. The side and rear yards must conform with Section 153.310. Each building site shall be landscaped according to standards cited in the Akron Development Guide and shall require approval of the DPUD.
7. All sides of buildings shall be faced with brick or masonry, or other suitable material, subject to Building Department and DPUD approval. Color shall be integral to the building product. Construction materials for exterior surfaces are subject to approval of the DPUD.
8. Off-street parking areas shall conform to Building Code and Zoning Code standards. Parking lot and site lighting standards shall not exceed 35 feet in height. The area between the parking area and the street line shall be landscaped according to standards cited in the Akron Development Guide and shall be paved to Akron Engineering Bureau standards and shall require DPUD approval. All parking and drives shall be paved to Akron Engineering Bureau standards. Perimeter of lots and interior islands shall be curbed with either full-depth, poured in place concrete, or pre-cast concrete curb.
9. All signs shall comply with the sub-chapter of On-Premises Exterior Signs at 153.350 et seq. of the Akron Zoning Code,

with the additional provision that only flush mounted signs or ground signs less than five (5) feet in height will be permitted. Ground signs shall be a minimum of ten (10) feet behind the right-of-way, and materials shall resemble and be compatible with building material. Information on signs shall be limited to business, or project identification, log and address. Multiple signs shall not be permitted for multi-tenant buildings. The design, size of lettering, and lighting of all signs shall be submitted for review and approval of the DPUD.

10. No outdoor advertising display of any nature shall be placed, erected, or located in the Redevelopment Area.

F. Duration of Controls

The Redevelopment Plan shall be in full force and effect for a period of 40 years for the date of original approval by the City of Akron.

G. Other Provisions Necessary to Meet State and Local Requirements

1. Relationship to Local Objectives

The objectives and proposals for this Redevelopment Plan conform with the Land Use and Development Guide Plan for the City of Akron.

2. Provision for Amending Plan

This Redevelopment Plan may be amended upon approval by the City Planning Commission and City Council. Any amendment that does not expand the project boundary shall not require further public notice or hearing.